

arts lettres techniques ARCHITECT

Sussex Cottage, 22 Park Village East, London NW1 7PZ

Planning and Listed Building Submission: Heritage Statement



John Nash – Park Village 1823

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1.1 Historic Overview

The Park Village, East and West, is part of John Nash's Regent's Park development for the Crown Estate. In The Park Village 'Nash gave definitive form to the newly-emerging villa-suburb, still for many people the most desirable setting for urban life'. (Geoffrey Tyack, 'John Nash and The Park Village', *Georgian Group Journal* 1993, 68) A copy of Nash's original sketch plan for the Village, dated 24th December 1823, is preserved in the National Archives (MPE 911). This shows picturesque cottages in various styles placed, as afterwards built, amongst picturesque greenery along the banks of a branch of the Regent's Canal (the canal was filled in during World War II).

Sussex Cottage is half of a semi-detached pair with Albany Cottage, 24 Park Village East, forming a building which is partly Italianate partly Classical in style, completed by 1829. (Tyack, 70) Facing the road, the composition of the building is asymmetrical, with the front door of Sussex Cottage around the corner on the short northern elevation, the asymmetry perhaps intended to give the impression of one 'villa' rather than two dwellings (NME, Figure 1).

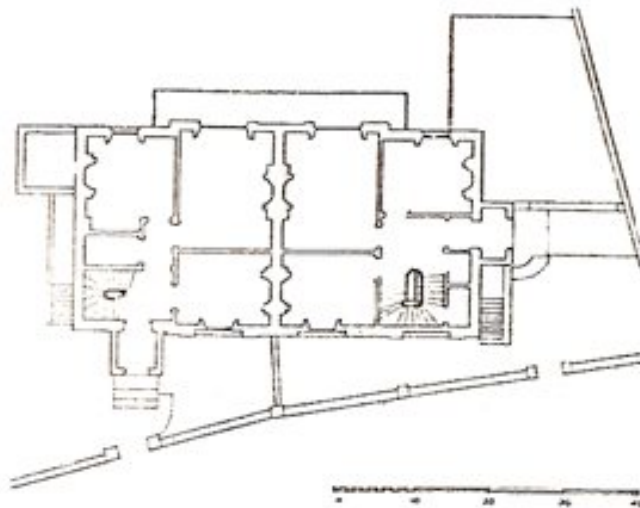


Fig.1

On the garden side, the building's large windows, shared balcony and central pediment show that this was the principal façade, taking advantage of the view down a gentle slope to the canal and across the "valley" to cottages in Park Village West and Saint Katherine's church beyond (NME, Figure 2).



Fig. 2

Sussex Cottage, like most of the houses in Park Village East, is now listed Grade II* and in general terms is well preserved. It was restored following bomb damage during World War II (18-20 Park Village East were partly demolished by the same bomb) and in its present state has lost a good deal of the rustication, has a dormer window on the garden side, a change from casement to sash window glazing and the loss of the upper part of the balcony: the original balcony had trellis work and a roof. Importantly, the heavily rusticated billiard room was completely lost during the wartime damage and subsequent 'restoration'. These lost features are visible in a photograph showing two members of the Montague-Smith family in c.1910 (Figure 3) and the original balcony occurs in the drawings prepared during WWII for the Survey of London.



Fig.3

The 1910 photograph also shows a non-original, Middle-Eastern style projecting window on the 1st floor, and a large masonry construction at garden level which the Montague-Smith family have recorded as a Billiard Room, which had become fashionable already by the 1840s. The large extent of the Billiard Room is shown in plan in the drawings of 22-24 Park Village East published in the Survey of London (Figure 3). *Survey of London* volume 21: 'The Parish of St Pancras Part 3: Tottenham Court Road & Neighbourhood', eds. J.R.Howard Roberts and Walter H.Godfrey, London 1949 Plate 97).

A photograph taken for the Survey of London during or shortly after WW II but not subsequently published shows the roofless interior of this space against Nash's original porch (Figure 4). During the post-war restoration, the larger part of the Billiard Room was demolished, rebuilt to serve as boiler room, coal cellar and lavatory (the latter two elements converted to a bathroom in 1982).



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

It is important to note that the restoration omitted much of the stucco detail, particularly at the garden level, which taken together with the loss of the trellis and the concrete balcony replacement, deprives the garden elevation of its original fineness (Fig. 1, 4 and 5).

1.2 Need and Justification

The purpose of the proposed interventions is to re-organise the garden access from within the house, currently the French doors from the drawing room provide the only exit, effectively making the room a corridor. The conversion of a postwar window and wall into a doorway allows for informal everyday access for the owner, and to facilitate the upgrading of hot water services with new equipment in the boiler room. This location minimizes any impact on historic fabric.

1.3 Specification

The masonry work and joinery is described on drawing PVE 011, and conforms to the Crown Estates specification by Purcell Architects. European hardwood is to be used for the joinery, with the brickwork and render to match the existing materials in this location – cement based post-war construction. The alteration allows for the incorporation of modern boiler facilities in the existing Boiler room without altering the finished floor levels.

1.4 Defining Significance

The modern additions replacing the Billiard Room are of low constructional quality, provide poor internal accommodation (fig.6), and offers no fineness to the garden elevation. The window to be removed (Fig.6) is modern softwood construction, with lintel and cill in concrete.



Fig. 6

2 Proposal Description – submitted drawings:

- 2.1 PVE 000 1:1250 / 1:500 Location Plans A3
- PVE 001 Existing Site Photographs A3
- PVE 002 1:50 Lower Ground Floor existing Plan A3
- PVE 003 1:50 Lower Ground Floor proposed Plan A3
- PVE 004 1:50 Ground Floor Plan existing/proposed A3
- PVE 005 1:50 First Floor Plan existing/proposed A3
- PVE 006 1:50 East Elevation existing/proposed A3
- PVE 007 1:50 North Elevation existing A3
- PVE 008 1:50 North Elevation proposed A3
- PVE 009 1:50 West Elevation existing A3
- PVE 010 1:50 West Elevation proposed A3
- PVE 011 1:10 / 1:2 Door Details proposed A3

3 Appearance and Access

3.1 External design strategy:

The new door is a direct facsimile of the existing door at lower ground level giving access to the street (Fig. 7,8). This door is directly aligned with the proposed new door to the garden, and of similar proportion. All timber section sizes and moulding details are to be used, together with ironmongery and glazing specification. This strategy minimizes the impact of the new door by keeping the existing joinery language of the house. The door has few details, but where present on the solid lower panels are fine and that is considered an asset to the garden level rear elevation, which suffers from a lack of detail.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

There is a small step to prevent water ingress, there is no logic to providing a level threshold as there is no possible non-ambulant access to either the garden level or the lower ground level.

4 Appendix

Information about the Billiard Room came to the current lessee and her family from the Montague Smith family who lived at 22 Park Village East from c.1910-1930. The Montague-Smith's had the garden redesigned by Mrs. Simon Jeunes. The garden during their time included a thatched Summer House at the edge of the canal.

Inscriptions on reverse of three photographs lent in 1991 by Rosemary Harding to the lessee and copied by her. Rosemary Harding was the daughter of Marjorie Harding, née Montague-Smith, and the inscriptions were written by Marjorie:

- a) of animals in garden below pergola

“My 2 cats & Roughie [the dog, parrot also apparently present in cage]. 22 Park Village East, Garden laid out by Mrs. Simon Jeunes & Arbour at end built by Dad. Canal at bottom of garden – opposite Guards Barracks on other side.”

- b) interior of smaller bedroom in west side

“After my return for good from France and Germany. My room. Late summer 1910. Camden out Winter 1910-11. London Ball & Derry[?] Ball after.”

- c) Marjorie with dog looking out of window of main bedroom on west side

“Roughie and me at Park Village East”

- d) Photo in form of a postcard without inscriptions with a man and a woman looking out from the balcony of 22 Park Village East. These are presumably Marjorie's parents, photographed shortly after moving into the house.

The present lessee's family were visited by Marjorie Harding and her mother, Mrs. Montague-Smith, during the 1960s, Mrs. Montague-Smith being by that time a very old lady. They told us that the Summer House was thatched by “our thatcher from Norfolk”.

Figures 5, 6, 7, 8 of present condition by Arts Lettres Techniques Architect